

MCHS-UGRR COMMITTEE  
P. O. BOX 116  
JACKSONVILLE, IL 62651

October 2, 2020

Congressman Darin LaHood  
Ashley.Antoskiewicz@mail.house.gov  
Washington, D.C.

Re: New Philadelphia National Historic Park Act, H.R. 8224

Dear Congressman LaHood:

The Underground Railroad Committee of the Morgan County Historical Society is writing in support of your efforts to bring New Philadelphia into the United States National Park Service. New Philadelphia was the location of the first African American founded town in our nation's history at a time of great racial turbulence. There is no site comparable to New Philadelphia in the National Park System.

Frank McWhorter, the founder of New Philadelphia, was remarkable, not only for his vision of establishing a racially diverse community at that time, but purchasing his freedom, as well as that of his wife and fourteen other family members. The archaeological site of New Philadelphia continues today in West-Central Illinois nearly a century after most of its residents moved away.

As a unit of the National Park Service, New Philadelphia will contribute to a more comprehensive history of our nation. Federal protection will ensure that archaeological evidence held in the soil of New Philadelphia may significantly contribute to new ideas and theories about how to study race relations over a one-hundred-year period. Passage of H. R. 8224 will come at a time in the United States which may assist in accentuating our unity and recognition of the national significance of the contributions of African Americans.

Therefore, please add our name to those endorsing your efforts to unite our country and acknowledge the wonderful effort of Frank McWhorter and his followers as part of our country's history.

Sincerely,

Terry Maggart  
Chair

Dr. Barbara L. Suelter  
Treasurer